

## Tobacco Use

### *Cigarette Use*

- ! In 1999, 73% of Tennessee high school students and 70% of high school students nationwide had tried smoking a cigarette during their lifetimes. A slightly higher percentage of males (75%) had tried smoking compared with females (72%). The 1999 prevalence is similar to that in 1995, 75%.
- ! Of the total Tennessee student respondents, 38% had smoked cigarettes in the previous 30 days, while the national percentage was 35%. By gender, 39% of males and 36% of females had smoked in the past 30 days. African-American students (22%) had recently smoked in approximately half the proportion of white students (41%). By grade-level, a steady increase was observed in the percentage of respondents who reported recent smoking: 9th graders, 33%; 10th graders, 38%; 11th graders, 38%; 12th graders, 42%.
- ! Twenty percent of Tennessee students had smoked on at least 20 or more of the past 30 days, compared to 17% nationally. While males (19%) and females (20%) did not differ significantly in recent frequent smoking. However, nearly four times more white students (23%) than African-American students (6%) reported recent frequent smoking.
- ! Twelve percent of students had purchased cigarettes at a store or gas station within the past 30 days (15% of males and 8.3% of females). This is a significant drop from the 1995 figure of 42%. Twelfth graders were much more likely to purchase cigarettes than other students (26%, compared to 13% of 11th graders, 8.4% of 10th graders, and 3.5% of 9th graders).
- ! Of those students below the legal age to purchase tobacco, 20% were able to purchase cigarettes at a business establishment. Nationally, 23.5% of students reported purchasing their own cigarettes in a store or gas station. Male students (27%) in Tennessee did so with greater frequency than females (12%). More than twice as many older students (aged 16 or 17) (24%) did so than younger students (aged 15 or under) (10%).
- ! Ten percent of students had purchased cigarettes in a store or gas station within the past 30 days, and were not asked to show proof of age. For students who were habitual smokers, 70% had purchased their own cigarettes without being asked for proof of age.
- ! In 1999, the total percentage of students who were, or had ever been, regular cigarette smokers (at least one cigarette per day for 30 days) was 28%. White students (32%) were three times more likely to be, or to have been, regular cigarette smokers than African-American students (10%), with no gender differences.